

Request for Support ~ HB-280 ~ Bicycle Clean-up Bill
Sponsored by Jeff Essmann

Goal: To improve safety for people riding bicycles by cleaning up outdated language in the statutes related to bicycling and adopting current national practices. This bill provides clarification for motorists and bicyclists on where and how people are allowed to ride a bicycle on the roadways.

Method: Reviewed and adapted current nationally- recommended statutes for bicycles.

61-8-102 Definitions: *Moved all definitions under this section and cleaned up antiquated language. Simplified definition of Bicycle and included a definition for an Electric Bicycle. With improvements in battery, motor and control technology, bicycles with low-powered electric motors to aid in propulsion are becoming common. Their speed capability is low, and can be controlled electronically. They are quiet and non-polluting, so they are acceptable on paths open to bicycles.*

61-8-324, Overtaking Vehicle on the Right: *Since bicyclists may ride on the shoulder of the roadway, bicyclists should be permitted to overtake on the right on the shoulder under the same conditions that apply to any vehicle in the right-hand travel lane.*

61-8-326 No Passing Zones: It is essential for a driver to move over far enough to provide ample room to safely pass a bicyclist. Doing so may require crossing the center line. However, overtaking slow vehicles does not require as much distance as overtaking vehicles traveling near the speed limit. In particular, it is often only necessary to merge partway into the oncoming lane to overtake a bicyclist, and so the distance required for overtaking is even shorter. Such overtaking is common and has not been shown to be a problem.

61-8-604 Clinging to vehicles: updates trailer language to current terminology

61-8-605, Positioning on the Roadway: 'as far to the right as practicable' is ambiguous and often mis-interpreted to mean 'as far to the right as POSSIBLE. Although the usual position of bicycles is near the right edge of the road, there are situations where this is unsafe and unreasonable. The present provision encourages the novice cyclist's mistake of "hugging the curb". Riding too close to the curb encourages motorists to attempt to pass even where passing is not safe. It contributes to mistakes where motorists turn in front of cyclists, the so-called "right hook". It tends to force cyclists to ride too close to parked cars, exposing them to the risk of being "doored", to ride over and through hazards rather than around them and to pass on the right. It also leads to novice cyclists making left turns by swerving in front of traffic from the right edge, as in a "shooting gallery".

61-8-607, Lights and Reflectors: A headlight and rear reflector or tail light are among the most important safety items required for bicycle operation at night. Reflective clothing and gear has become readily available and provides a reasonable alternative for bicycle reflectors since bicycles often times do not have reflectors and many styles of pedals do not have reflectors.

Recommending a six-foot flag on every bicycle is not practical or feasible.

